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ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK VICUS FORTUNAE – PROJECTS AND PROBLEMS

ABSTRACT

The project Archaeological Park Vicus Fortunae is based on the Roman provincial archaeology and heritage from the Roman era.

The area around the community of Hajdina, where the park is planned, is well known from different archaeological periods (Colonia Ulpia Traiana Poetovio). In the past a few research works were carried out yielding some interesting evidence – in its near vicinity two Mithras' temples were discovered of which the first remains in situ and will be a constituent part of the future archaeological park.

Roman settlement of the contemporary cultural, political and economic site represents nowadays an unexploited advantage for a social and cultural development.

We would like to attract into this project all local people interested in the heritage, as well as tourists. With the help of experts on the Roman provincial archaeology and on communicating heritage (museum experts, archaeologists, pedagogic workers), we shall be able to create thematic workshops and events with the goal to raise awareness about the heritage and its importance. All activities will be meant for all age groups. The programme will contain new ideas and programmes with the aim to promote Roman provincial and classic archaeology, as well as archaeological movable and immovable heritage and its protection. Conceptually, the programme shall become a new centre of cultural and tourist development of the community of Hajdina.

KEYWORDS: SLOVENIA, HAJDINA, CULTURAL HERITAGE, ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARK VICUS FORTUNAE, ACTIVITIES, WORKSHOPS, PROBLEMS.

Cultural heritage is one of the most important elements of our identity, therefore its protection and restoration are of extreme importance as well as rendering it public in order to foster the establishment of the identity and encourage creativity inspired by the heritage. The project Archaeological Park *Vicus Fortunae* is based on the Roman provincial archaeology and heritage from the Roman era.

The archaeological park is planned on the

territory of Hajdina community which boasts rich finds from different archaeological periods (Vomer Gojkovič and Kolar 1993) (Fig. 1).

Poetovio was actively involved in economics and politics already in the prehistoric times. Many merchants reached the town by following the ancient amber road passing through the area. At the arrival of Romans around 15 BC, *Poetovio* was part of the kingdom of Noricum. Thus Celts and Romans developed economic and military rela-



Fig. 1 Aerial photograph of the Hajdina (Photo archive of the Ptuj-Ormož Regional Museum)

tionships very early. Favourable strategic position of *Poetovio* was very much appreciated already at the arrival of Romans in the area (Vomer Gojkovič 2011: 10-13).

The town started to truly develop at the end of the 1st century when the military headquarters were moved to *Vinodobona* on the Danube, and when the emperor Trajan bestowed on *Poetovio* self-governing rights together with the administrative status of colony – *colonia Ulpia Traiana Poetovio*. The town also got a land register, and veterans who had distinguished themselves during their military career were encouraged to colonise it. All these privileges, economic activities carried out by the citizens, thriving crafts and a growing demand, and ever more dense traffic resulted in prosperity of an important number of citizens and in a high level of civilisation and culture (Horvat et al. 2003: 153-189. Vomer Gojkovič, 2004: 86-89).

In the 2nd century, *Poetovio* had grown into a prosperous provincial town. Most densely populated town quarters were to be found on the last

Drava terrace and on the northern part of Spodnja Hajdina were a trade, business and sacral quarter, called *vicus Fortunae* was situated. There, parts of Roman architecture, some decorated with frescoes and mosaics, were discovered. Near residential, business and other public buildings were situated various craft workshops and offices among which the most important was undoubtedly the customs office and warehouses established during the Emperor Hadrian tenure (*publicum portorium Illyrici*).

Amongst numerous unearthed remains of Roman sanctuaries, the most outstanding were the discoveries of Mithras temples dedicated to the god of light Mithras (Fig. 2), one in 1898-1899, the First Mithras temple preserved *in situ* (Vomer Gojkovič et al. 2011) and another found in 1901, the Second Mithras temple (Abramić 1925: 63-73), as well as a sanctuary dedicated to divine wet nurses, *Nutrices Augustae* (Wigand 1915: 189-218), depicted on marble plates from Pohorje, which represent a special feature of Roman *Poetovio*. In the quarter of *vicus Fortunae* in Spodnja



Fig. 2 Inside of the Mithras Shrine I (Photo M. Vomer Gojkovič)

Hajdina, where warehouses and sanctuaries were located, an early-Christian church was discovered where the bishop Victorinus of Poetovio served at the end of 3rd and the beginning of 4th centuries (Bratož 2001: 313-325).

The western cemetery in Hajdina contains some graves dated from the 1st to the first half of the 5th centuries lying along the road in the direction of *Celeia* for some 2.1 km. At certain points graves were relatively far from the road which could imply that the cemetery, in fact, spread along secondary roads leading to south and north. Cremation graves prevail while skeletal ones are less common. The graves contain goods such as ceramics and glassware, weapons and tools, jewellery and also amber goods (Istenič 1999. Istenič 2000).

Roman settlement of the contemporary cultural, political and economic site represents nowadays an unexploited advantage for a social and cultural development. The cooperation of institutions in charge of the presentation of the heritage is at its beginnings.

Tourism in the Lower Podravje region is part of the global and European market known especially for its international events, for its thermal, archaeological, ethnological, cultural, historical, oenological and gastronomic supply, while the entire region offers excellent sports facilities and centres for relaxation and recreation. From the tourist point of view, the region of Lower Podravje is extremely varied and picturesque. The area lying between Slovenske Gorice and Haloze, Drava and Ptuj fields, boasting excellent natural features, rich cultural heritage, unique geographic position, and well-developed and still-growing tourist facilities, as well as the already proverbial hospitality of its people, offers countless possibilities for a sustainable tourism development, as tourism represents an important business and development opportunity.

The site where the archaeological park should be revived is rich in cultural heritage. Research works have been carried out there yielding some interesting results – in its near vicinity two Mithras



Fig. 3: The plan of geophysical research in Spodnja Hajdina (from Mušič 2012: 3)

temples were found of which one is presented *in situ* and will, as such, represent a constituent part of the archaeological park. Due to the fact that the surroundings of the first Mithras temple were taken care of with the help of funds allocated by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development through the project Europe invests in rural areas, which ended in 2012, it seems only logical to continue the project by including it in the cultural and tourist offer of the community, and to set up a tourist-information centre at the entrance of the archaeological park in Spodnja Hajdina. Archaeological research carried out by the district institute Regional Museum Ptuj-Ormož shall thus gain additional value through the functioning of the park (Fig. 4).

The project of bringing new content to the mentioned site was submitted to an international call of proposals: Operative Programme IPA Slovenia-Croatia 2007-2013 to get European funds, but unfortunately without success. Even before the outcome was published, some research had been done into archives related to the previous ar-

chaeological research followed by some non-destructive research of the soil in order to get the starting point for steps to follow during the implementation of the project.

The establishment of a cultural-information centre Archaeological Park Vicus Fortunae is being under its way with the:

- preparation of documents for the establishment of a cultural-information centre with a permanent public presentation of the archaeological heritage and its inclusion in scientific-research, educational and economic-tourist trends;

- restoration and modification of the existing farmhouse together with the adjacent outbuildings into a cultural-information centre;

- establishment of archaeological parks and preservation of unbuilt plots will consequently become an archaeological reserve;

- drawing of a plan of how to use and include the park into the cultural and tourist offer of the region.

In 2012, geophysical research was carried out

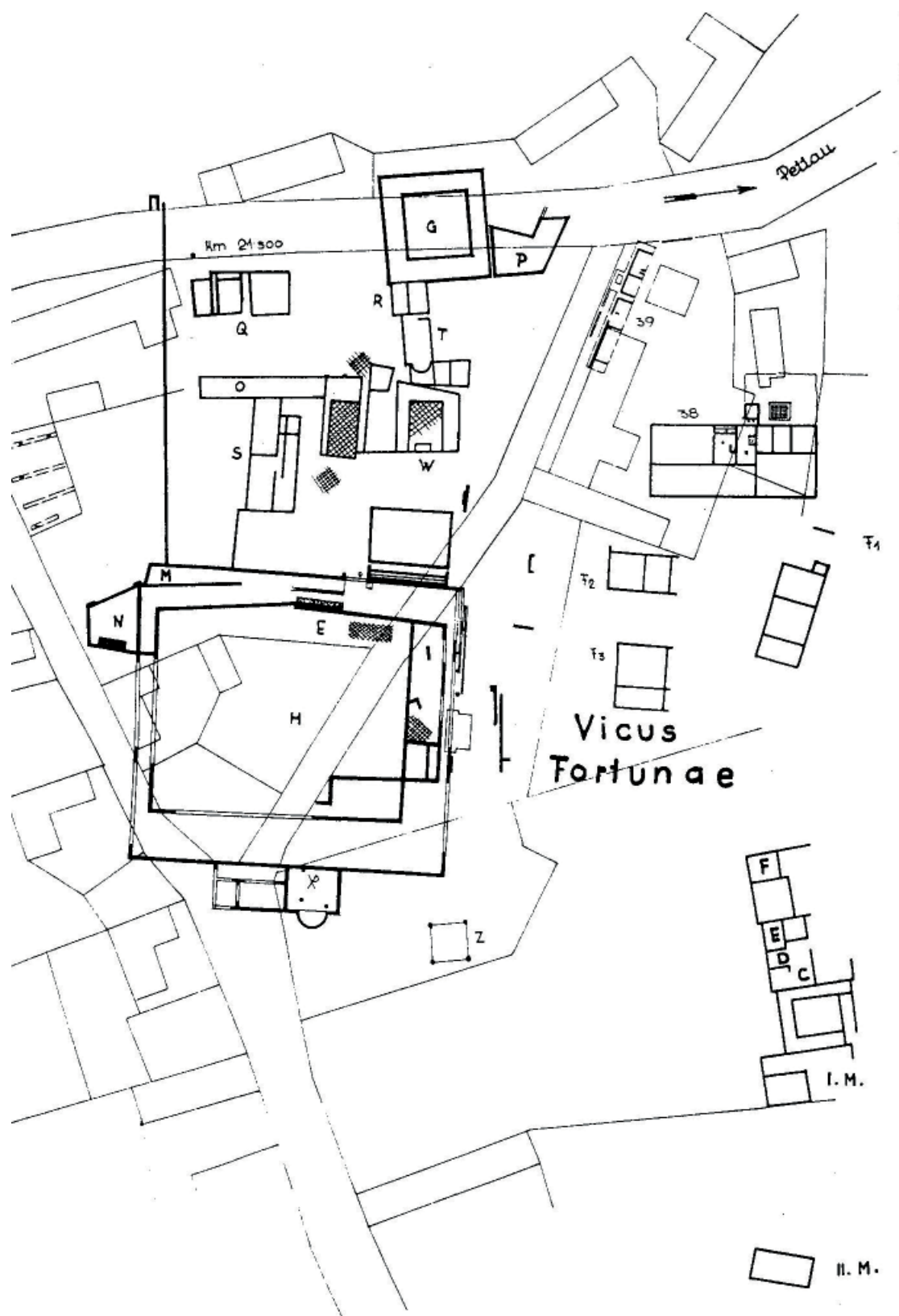


Fig 4: The plan of Schmid's excavations in the Vicus Fortunae (from Vomer Gojkovič and Kolar 1993: 44)



Fig. 5 Roman games in Spodnja Hajdina in the year 2014 (Photo M. Vomer Gojkovič)

by the company Gearh on a part of the territory where the archaeological park *Vicus Fortunae* is being planned (Mušič 2012).

The research was done in accordance with culture-preservation requirements set specifically for the area where the archaeological park is being planned. In compliance with the directives of culture-preservation requirements, more than just two land-plots meant for the park were researched. Due to the extreme importance of this archaeological site and despite insufficient research works in the past, the geophysical research took measurements in a dense net of parallel profiles using a georadar method, geoelectrical resistivity method and magnetic method.

The georadar method yielded very significant results on researched sites. Numerous strong signals were recorded as waves hit different remains from antiquity. Geoelectrical method of map drawing often showed almost identical results as the georadar method; however, at some sites the former significantly completed the latter. Due to

the geoelectrical method a ground-plan of a bigger building was found.

Results of the geophysical research serve as a basis for further archaeological research of the area destined to become the archaeological park.

The continuation of the project is based on the research results. Once more the project will be submitted to an international call of proposals to obtain European funds with which the infrastructure would be built and the needed archaeological research could be carried out which represent the base for the functioning of a tourist-information centre in the archaeological park *Vicus Fortunae*.

PLANNED PARK ACTIVITIES

A disused farmhouse will be adapted to host the main office of the cultural-information centre with all the necessary equipment, a tourist-information office, exhibition grounds, a place for multivision, a classroom, a lavatory, a refreshment room.



Fig. 6 The Society of Women and Girls of the Hajdina Commune as participants of the Roman games 2014 (Photo M. Vomer Gojkovič)



Fig. 8 Participants of the Roman games (Photo M. Vomer Gojkovič)

We would like to attract into this project all local people interested in the heritage, as well as tourists. With the help of experts on the Roman provincial archaeology and on communicating heritage (museum experts, archaeologists, pedagogic workers), we shall be able to create thematic workshops and events with the goal to raise awareness about the heritage and its importance. All activities will be meant for all age groups. The programme will contain new ideas and programmes with the aim to promote Roman provincial and classic archaeology, as well as archaeological movable and unmovable heritage and its protection. Conceptually, the programme shall become a new centre of cultural and tourist development of the community of Hajdina.

The project foresees training workshops during which participants will gather some experience of how to disseminate their knowledge, and they will acquire some new skills. Five workshops are planned:

Roman pottery workshop during which the participants will make various earthenware products with the help of a potter. Finished products will be obtained by burning them in a Roman kiln reconstructed within the boundaries of the archaeological park Vicus Fortunae. At the end of the workshop, the participants will have to present their products in terms of a “museum” approach with the help of a museum-expert. At the same time, they will learn about the national legislation dealing with the preservation, protection and presentation of the archaeological cultural heritage.

Roman make-up and decoration workshop will introduce the creation of jewellery from different materials. During the workshop, a form of experimental archaeology will be used.

Amusement workshop aims to establish an intergeneration contact between children, adolescents, students and adults. Through this workshop, the participants will learn the basics of children’s and other games (Fig 5).

Roman cuisine workshop is intended for all age groups. The participants will get to know the



Fig. 7 Roman food (Photo M. Vomer Gojkovič)

use of some herbs, spices and other ingredients needed in the preparation of Roman dishes, and the use of kitchen- and tableware. The Association of Women and Girls from Hajdina will participate in the workshop owing to their expertise in the Roman cuisine which they have been practising for some years now (Fig. 6, 7).

Roman daily routine workshop aims to show Roman habits connected with the culture of dressing and everyday work. A form of experimental archaeology will be used during the workshop.

The educational programme planned for the workshops will help disseminate knowledge of the Roman heritage. Once this particular sort of knowledge will have been acquired, it will be possible to include certain activities into the yearly performance of Roman Games (Fig. 8, 9, 10). The Society for Roman History and Culture Ptuj Poetovio LXIX (online resource: <http://www.rimskeigre.si/>) has taken over the organisation of the Roman Games taking place in August each year. However, in the implementation



Fig. 9 Roman camp in Spodnja Hajdina 2014 (Photo M. Vomer Gojkovič)

of the Games are involved people from the wider area, from the museum to local people, from groups coming from all over Slovenia to more and more numerous international groups. Through active participation in the Roman Games, dozens of groups show their care and concern to revive the rich Roman history. The use of experimental method will help us draw the heritage nearer to the public, and will, at the same time, render the programme of the Games livelier.

Problems at the creation of the archaeological park *Vicus Fortunae*

Roman settlement of the contemporary cultural, political and economic site represents nowadays an unexploited advantage for a social and cultural development. The cooperation between institutions in charge of the presentation and marketing of the heritage is badly coordinated, which is largely detrimental to the promotion of cultur-

al heritage. Because of this, monuments are often considered as an end in itself, are improperly marked and often devoid of any explanatory note; consequently the awareness about the importance of archaeological heritage among citizens and visitors is inadequate. Due to the insufficient education the general public cannot participate in the preservation of cultural heritage, and attempts of creativity inspired by the heritage are scarce.

Despite the existence of a Roman monument *in situ* in the area discussed, its promotion is far from being sufficient. Within the scope of the present project, this cultural site will be revived on the basis of Roman settlement. It is our sincere wish to create better conditions for the due recognition of this outstanding archaeological monument through the establishment of the archaeological park *Vicus Fortunae* and the implementation of the project content.



Fig. 10 Dancers in front of the Mithras Shrine I (Photo M. Vomer Gojkovič)

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REZIME

ARHEOLOŠKI PARK VICUS FORTUNAE – PROJEKTI I PROBLEMI

KLJUČNE REČI: SLOVENIJA, HAJDINA, KULTURNO NASLEĐE, ARHEOLOŠKI PARK VICUS FORTUNAE, AKTIVNOSTI, RADIONICE, PROBLEMI.

Kulturno nasleđe je jedan od najvažnijih elemenata našeg identiteta, dakle njena zaštita i obnova su od izuzetnog značaja, kao i promovisanje u javnosti u cilju podsticanja uspostavljanja identiteta i podsticanja kreativnosti inspirisanih u nasleđu. Projekat Arheološki park *Vicus Fortunae* zasnovan je na rimskoj provincijalnoj arheologiji i nasleđu iz rimskog doba.

Područje oko zajednice Hajdina, gde se planira park je dobro poznato iz različitih arheoloških perioda. Najvažniji je bio od 1. do 5. veka kada

je ovo područje bilo sastavni deo rimskog agera sa gradom *Poetovio (Colonia Ulpia Traiana Poetovio)*, čiji deo se tada zvalo *Vicus Fortunae*. Arheološki park je planiran na lokaciji koja je poznata po svom bogatom arheološkom kulturnom nasleđu. U prošlosti su ovde bili izvođeni istražni radovi koji su doneli zanimljive dokaze – u neposrednoj blizini otkrivena su dva hrama boga Mitre od kojih su ostaci prvog sačuvani na mestu otkrića, *in situ*, i biće sastavni deo budućeg arheološkog parka.

Kulturno nasleđe iz rimskog perioda je posebno bogato u pomenutom području. nekoliko rimskih spomenika predstavljeni su *in situ*, a sitni nalazi s toga područja mogu se videti u muzejima u Štajerskoj.

Rimsko naselje u savremenom kulturnom, političkom i ekonomskom okruženju predstavlja danas neiskorišćenu prednost za društveni i kulturni razvoj. Saradnja između institucija koje su zadužene za prezentaciju baštine su u začetku. Spomenici su nedovoljno obeleženi i često bez ikakvog obrazloženja; pa možemo reći da je svest o važnosti arheološkog nasleđa među građanima i posetiocima još uvek neadekvatna.

Mi bismo želeli da privučemo u ovom projektu sve ljude iz okoline koji su zainteresovani za nasleđe, kao i turiste. Uz pomoć stručnjaka (muzejski stručnjaci, arheolozi, pedagoški radnici), mi ćemo biti u stanju da stvorimo tematske radionice i događaje sa ciljem da se podigne svest o baštini i njenom značaju. Aktivnosti će biti namenjene svim starosnim grupama. Program će sadržati nove ideje i programe s ciljem da promoviše rimsku arheologiju, kao i arheološku baštinu i njenu zaštitu. Konceptualno, program Arheološkog parka *vicus Fortunae* će postati novi centar kulturnog i turističkog razvoja zajednice Hajdina.